

**NEW UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION
TRANSMITTAL***(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 C.F.R. 1.53(b))*

Docket No.
M3850.0042/P042
Total pages in this
submission
45

TO THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTSBox Patent Application
Washington, D.C. 20231

Transmitted herewith for filing under 35 U.S.C. 111(a) and 37 C.F.R. 1.53(b) is a new utility patent application for an invention entitled:

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR CONTROLLING REPRODUCTION OF AN AUDIOVISUAL WORK

and invented by:

Hoyt A. Fleming, III and Paul A. Revis

IF A CONTINUATION APPLICATION, check appropriate box and supply requisite information:

Continuation Divisional

Continuation-in-part (CIP) of prior application No.: _____

Enclosed are:

Application Elements

1. Filing fee as calculated and transmitted as described below
2. Specification having 27 pages(s) and including the following:
 - a. Descriptive title of the invention
 - b. Cross references to related applications (*if applicable*)
 - c. Statement regarding Federally-sponsored research/development (*if applicable*)
 - d. Reference to microfiche appendix (*if applicable*)
 - e. Background of the invention
 - f. Brief summary of the invention
 - g. Brief description of the drawings (*if drawings filed*)
 - h. Detailed description
 - i. Claims as classified below
 - j. Abstract of the disclosure

JCS9 U.S. PTO
03/29/00
03/16/00

Application Elements (continued)

3. Drawing(s) (when necessary as prescribed by 35 U.S.C. 113)
 Formal Informal Number of sheets: 3

4. Oath or Declaration

- Newly executed (original or copy) Unexecuted
- Copy from a prior application (37 C.F.R. 1.63(d) (for continuation/divisional applications only)
- With Power of Attorney Without Power of Attorney

5. Incorporation by reference (*usable if Box 4b is checked*)
The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which a copy of the oath or declaration is Supplied under Box 4b, is considered as being part of the disclosure of the accompanying application and is hereby incorporated by reference therein.

6. Computer program in microfiche

7. Genetic sequence submission (*if applicable, all must be included*)

- Paper copy
- Computer readable copy
- Statement verifying identical paper and computer readable copies

Accompanying Application

9. Assignment papers (cover sheet & document(s))

10. 37 C.F.R. 3.73(b) statement (when there is an assignee)

11. English translation document (if applicable)

12. Information Disclosure Statement/PTO-1449 Copies of IDS citations

13. Preliminary Amendment

14. Acknowledgment postcard

15. Certified copy of priority document(s) (if foreign priority is claimed)

16. Certificate of Mailing

First Class Express Mail (Label No.: _____)

17. Small Entity statement(s) -- # submitted *(if Small Entity status claimed)*

Accompanying Application (continued)

17. Additional enclosures (please identify below):

Fee Calculation and Transmittal

The filing fee for this utility patent application is calculated and transmitted as follows:

 Large Entity Small Entity

| CLAIMS AS FILED | | | | | |
|---|---------|-----------|---------|-----------|-----------|
| For | # Filed | # Allowed | # Extra | Rate | Fee |
| Total Claims | 50 | - 20 = | 30 | x \$18.00 | \$540.00 |
| Independent Claims | 6 | - 3 = | 3 | x \$78.00 | \$234.00 |
| Multiple Dependent Claims (check if applicable) <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | |
| Other Fees (specify purpose): Recordation Fee | | | | | \$ 40.00 |
| BASIC FEE | | | | | \$690.00 |
| TOTAL FILING FEE | | | | | \$1504.00 |

A check in the amount of \$1504.00 to cover the total filing fee is enclosed.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge and Deposit Account No. 4 - 1073 as described below. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

Charge the amount of _____ as filing fee.

Credit any overpayment.

Charge any additional filing fees required under 37 C.F.R. 1.16 and 1.17.

Charge the issue fee set in 37 C.F.R. 1.18 at the mailing of the Notice of Allowance, pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.31(b).


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Dated: March 16, 2000

5

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICATION FOR U.S. LETTERS PATENT

10

Title:

15 METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR CONTROLLING REPRODUCTION OF
AN AUDIOVISUAL WORK

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METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR CONTROLLING REPRODUCTION OF
AN AUDIOVISUAL WORK

Cross Reference To Related Application

5 This application contains material which is related to U.S. application Serial
No. _____, filed January 27, 2000 and entitled "Video Review Apparatus and
Method."

Field of the Invention

10 The present invention relates to a method and apparatus for controlling the
reproduction of an audiovisual work based on program content.

Description of the Related Art

15 Many audiovisual works, such as movies and videos currently have a
content "rating" which is used to control access to the work by minors. The
movie ratings system in the United States has been determined by producers
(distributors, dealers) voluntarily. According to the document "THE MOVIE
BUSINESS BOOK, pp 396-406, 'THE VOLUNTARY MOVIE RATING
SYSTEM'", the ratings are broken down into five categories of:

"G", General Audiences--All ages admitted;

"PG", Parental Guidance Suggested--Some material may not be suitable for children;

"PG-13", Parents strongly cautioned--Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13;

5 "R", Restricted, under 17--Requires accompanying parent or adult guardian; and

"NC-17"--No children under 17 admitted.

10 Therefore, in accordance with these assignments, entrance to a movie theater is restricted and selling or renting of a video tape, may likewise be restricted. Currently, one rating level is assigned to an entire movie, and this rating level is utilized for comparison with the ages of patrons of a movie theater or buyers/renters at a video shop. However, only small portions of the work may be the cause of a particular rating (e.g., scenes which contain violence, 15 objectionable language, adult situations, nudity, etc.).

20 The current Digital Versatile Disk or Digital Video Disk (DVD) standard contains many features including a parental control feature. One method of parental control relies on a comparison of the rating of a DVD work with a parental control setting set at a DVD player. If the rating of the DVD work is higher (e.g., R is "higher" than PG-13, while PG-13 is "lower" than R) than that

set at the DVD player, then the DVD will not play. Another method of parental control allows for different rated versions, e.g. G, PG, PG13, R, NC-17 of a movie to reside on a single DVD. The lower rated versions remove objectionable content from the higher rated versions. A parent can select a lower rated version

5 for viewing by younger viewers. While this method is somewhat effective, it is well known that producers and directors of audiovisual works object to providing multiple versions of a work on a single DVD due to, e.g., the fact that it limits their creative freedom, and production costs are usually higher.

What is needed is a method and apparatus which allows a parent to edit a

10 pre-existing rated work on a DVD by removing objectionable material or by replacing objectionable material with non-objectionable material to effectively create a lower rated version for viewing.

Summary of the Invention

15 The present invention provides viewers, such as parents, with the ability to have a creative control over the playback of audiovisual work stored on a recording medium such as a DVD. The invention enables viewers to eliminate from a work

those scenes which are found objectionable so that a DVD player only plays non-objectionable scenes.

The invention creates and uses a database containing pointers pointing to objectionable video frames in a particular DVD work. The database can be generated by the playing of a DVD work, and cataloging the violence and other objectionable content of the work and assigning a ratings level in association with identification of the video frame numbers containing the objectionable material. The beginning and ending of a scene containing objectionable content can be identified either by video frame numbers or a time stamp of the video frames.

10 The database may be stored on a recording medium that is distinct from the DVD which may be a hard drive of a server accessible via the Internet or by a dial-up connection, or a removable storage medium such as a floppy disk or CD-ROM.

A viewer who desires to control reproduction of a DVD movie at a selected ratings level selects the desired ratings level for a DVD player. If the DVD recording medium contains that selected level of the work, then the DVD player plays back the selected ratings level version of the work. If the DVD recording medium does not contain a version of the work having the selected ratings level, then the DVD player accesses the database information, e.g., by accessing a server on the Internet, and downloads the pointers of the video frames containing the

objectionable scenes into a controller for the DVD player. The DVD player then, under control of the information contained in the database, plays the audio visual work jumping past all objectionable scenes indicated by the database.

The database can contain pointers to those video frames which have non-
5 objectionable scenes or to those video frames which have the objectionable scenes.

In either case, the DVD player uses the database to reproduce only the non-objectionable scenes of the work based on the selected ratings level.

10 In one embodiment, the database can be created by someone within a household who previews audiovisual works for viewing by younger viewers within the household. This way, particular scenes could be marked for inclusion or removal in the playback of the audiovisual work as desired by the screener.

These and other features and advantages of the invention will be more readily understood from the following detailed description which is provided in connection with the accompanying drawings.

15

Brief Description of the Drawings

FIG. 1 illustrates in flowchart format a program which can be run on any general purpose computer, e.g., a personal computer, to create a database in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a flowchart of a program which can be run on any general purpose computer, e.g., a personal computer, for controlling playback of a DVD player;

FIG. 3 is a block diagram of an apparatus, including a general purpose computer, which can be used to either create a database in accordance with the invention or to utilize the content of a database to control a DVD player in accordance with the invention.

Detailed Description

The present invention relies on the creation and use of a database which contains pointers to scenes of an audiovisual work which have objectionable content. Although the description below assumes that the database will contain pointers to scenes which have the objectionable content, it should be understood that the database can also be arranged to contain pointers to those scenes which do not have objectionable content therein, thereby indirectly indicating scenes which have the objectionable content.

The database can be built in accordance with the process flow indicated in FIG. 1. This process flow can be carried out on any general purpose computer, such as a personal computer. The process flow is started at a process segment 11,

following which at segment 13 a DVD movie is played. As the DVD movie is played on a DVD player, individual scenes and/or portions of scenes of the movie are categorized by assigning a ratings level in process segment 15. It should be noted that each scene of an audio visual work may be rated in accordance with its

5 content (e.g., nudity, language, violence, rape, etc.), and/or may be categorized by a ratings level. In addition, those selected scenes which are to be reviewed may be pre-identified on the work. For example, a reviewer may review those scenes which have been pre-identified with a particular ratings level. The rating levels applied can be those currently used for movie ratings, i.e., G, PG, PG-13, R, and

10 NC-17, or some other rating system may be used.

Once all of the scenes, or only selected scenes, are rated at process segment 15, the process proceeds to process segment 18 wherein a particular ratings level for the database is entered by a reviewer. For example, a reviewer may decide to create a PG-13 ratings database for playback of the movie. Once the PG-13 ratings level has been entered at process segment 18, a database is created containing pointers for all scenes of the audiovisual work which either contain an identification of all scenes which have an objectionable ratings level above that entered at process segment 18, e.g., R, NC-17, or pointers to all scenes which have a non-objectionable ratings level, that is which have a ratings level equal to or

below that entered at process segment 18, e.g., G, PG, PG-13. In either case the database will contain either directly or indirectly pointers which represent the objectionable scenes of the audiovisual work which are not to be contained in the playback. As noted, the pointers may be in the form of particular frame numbers
5 which contain objectionable scenes, or a time stamp representing objectionable scenes.

Once the database is created at process segment 17, the process proceeds to process segment 21 wherein a storage medium is loaded with the database. The storage medium may be a hard drive on a client accessible server as indicated by
10 process segment 19 or, alternatively, the database may be stored on a portable storage medium at process segment 21. The portable storage medium may be a floppy disk or a CD-ROM. Once the storage medium is loaded with the database, the processing ends at process segment 23. At this point, a database has been created on either a hard drive of a server (process segment 19) or on a portable
15 medium (process segment 21).

If the database is stored on a hard drive of a server, it may now be accessed by either a client dial-up connection to the server or by a client connection to the server over the Internet. In either case, a playback apparatus for the audiovisual work associated with the client can access the database and use it to control

reproduction of the audiovisual work. It should be noted that FIG. 1 process segments 15, 17 and 18 can all be carried out by any party including, e.g., a ratings organization, and the process is not limited to the source of the DVD, or the FIG. 1 process may be carried out by a screener within a household who is 5 assigned to screen audiovisual works for younger household viewers. In the latter case, the database which is created at process segment 17 may be loaded on the hard drive of a local computer within the household which is connected to control an audiovisual reproduction unit, such as a DVD player.

As an example of one embodiment, a DVD is provided to an individual for 10 free, the individual then rates and categorizes the DVD and uploads the database to a client on the Internet.

Once the database has been created, it can be used by a controller which controls playback of an audiovisual work using the process illustrated in FIG. 2. The FIG. 2 process may be carried out on a general purpose computer which is 15 coupled to an audiovisual playback device and which controls the playback device so that it only plays scenes as determined by the content of the database.

The process flow in FIG. 2 begins at process segment 31 and proceeds to process segment 33 where an audiovisual work, such as a DVD movie, is loaded

into an audiovisual reproduction device. The reproduction device also accepts an input from a screener, such as a parent, indicating what ratings level is appropriate for the playback. In process segment 37, the DVD player looks at the audiovisual work on the recording medium to determine if a ratings level version of the work 5 entered at process segment 35 is available on the recording medium. Assuming for the moment that the audiovisual work is a DVD movie, a DVD player is instructed to determine whether a version of the movie having the particular ratings level input at process segment 35 is available on the DVD recording medium. If it is, then the playback device proceeds to play the selected version at 10 process segment 39, and the process ends at process segment 37.

If, in process segment 37, it is determined that there is no version of the audiovisual work on the recording medium which corresponds to the ratings level set in process segment 35, then the process proceeds to process segment 41 where a controller for the audiovisual reproduction device connects with the previously 15 stored database. As noted, the database may be previously stored on a server on the Internet, in which case the controller for the audiovisual reproduction device establishes a connection to the server through the Internet and downloads the database. The database may also be available at the server through a dial-up connection, in which case the controller for the audiovisual work reproduction

device establishes the dial-up connection and downloads the database. In either case, the database is downloaded into the controller for use in controlling the audiovisual work reproducing unit.

It is also possible that the database may reside on a portable computer medium (e.g., such a medium can be sold with a DVD or provided by a "rental" store) which is inserted into the controller, for example a personal computer, which controls the reproducing unit, in which case the database is directly read off the recording medium without the need to establish a connection to a server.

It should be noted that a recorded medium which contains the database 10 may actually have a plurality of different databases, each associated with a respective ratings level. The database which is downloaded is that which corresponds to the ratings level input at process segment 35.

Once the database has been downloaded into the controller for the reproduction unit, the information in the database is used to control playback of 15 the audiovisual work at process segment 45. That is, if the database contains direct pointers to those scenes which are objectionable, the audiovisual work reproduction device will play all scenes of the work except those indicated as objectionable.

On the other hand, if the database contains information indicating those scenes which are not objectionable, then those non-objectionable scenes will be directly played by the reproduction device and the process sequence illustrated in FIG. 2 ends at process segment 47.

5 FIG. 3 illustrates an apparatus which can be used to both create a database in accordance with the process illustrated in FIG. 1 and to control a reproducing unit with information contained within the database in accordance with the process illustrated in FIG. 2.

10 The apparatus illustrated at FIG. 3 includes a computer 51 which may be a personal computer or the like, which has an associated input device 61 such as a keyboard or mouse. The computer 51 is coupled to an audiovisual reproducing unit 53 shown in FIG. 3 as a DVD player. The DVD player in turn has outputs for a video display monitor 57 and an audio reproduction system 59 which may be implemented as independent units or may both form part of a television, computer 15 or other device for reproducing the audio and visual information in an audiovisual work. The apparatus illustrated in FIG. 3 could be implemented as a personal computer which contains a DVD drive and which contains a modem or TCP/IP connection device for the Internet.

Computer 51 is shown as being coupled to a database 55. This database may be created by using the process illustrated in FIG. 1 above, in which case the database may reside on the hard drive of a server, or on a portable storage medium, or if the FIG. 3 apparatus itself is used to create the database, the 5 database may reside on the hard drive of computer 51.

For reproduction, computer 51 accesses the database 55 whether on a computer server, its own hard drive, or on a portable storage medium, and implements the process shown in FIG. 2 to control playback of DVD player 53.

The invention provides an easy way for a screener to control those scenes of 10 an audio visual work which are reproduced to thereby enable the screener to set a desired ratings level for the work for viewing by younger viewers, even when a version of the work having the desired ratings level is not available on the recording medium containing the work. The database may be created by the screener, or can be created by a separate screening entity which makes the database 15 available for use during reproduction of an audiovisual work.

While the invention has been disclosed with reference to specific embodiments thereof, it should be apparent that many modifications, changes and substitutions can be made to the illustrated embodiments without departing from

the spirit and scope of the invention. Accordingly, the invention is not to be construed as being limited by the foregoing description, but is only limited by the scope of the appended claims.

What is claimed as new and desired to be protected by Letters Patent of the United States is:

1. A method of creating a playback database for an audiovisual work
5 comprising the acts of:

assigning a respective content ratings level to at least a portion of a scene of
said work;

creating a database containing information identifying the at least a portion
of the scene and the content ratings level; and

10 storing said database on a storage medium different from the medium that
stores the audiovisual work.

2. A method as in claim 1, wherein said assigning act is performed in
response to ratings level inputs from a reviewer.

3. A method as in claim 1, wherein said act of creating includes creating
15 said database containing identifying information which identifies those scenes

having content ratings levels which are less than or equal to a predetermined content ratings level.

4. A method as in claim 1, wherein said act of creating includes creating said database containing identifying information which identifies those scenes 5 having content ratings levels which are greater than a predetermined content ratings level.

5. A method as in claim 1, wherein said act of creating includes creating a database containing information identifying content ratings levels for all scenes of a work.

10 6. A method as in claim 1, wherein said act of creating includes creating a database that contains data indicating which scenes of said work are to be reproduced.

7. A method as in claim 1, wherein said act of creating includes creating a 15 database that contains data indicating which scenes of said work are not to be reproduced.

8. A method as in claim 1, wherein said act of creating includes creating a database containing information identifying said at least a portion of the scene by a frame number.

9. A method as in claim 1, wherein said act of creating includes 5 creating a database containing information identifying said at least a portion of the scene by a time stamp.

10. A method as in claim 1, wherein the act of storing said database includes storing said database on a server computer which allows said database to be accessible to client computers.

10 11. A method as in claim 1, wherein the act of storing said database includes storing said database on a portable storage medium.

12. A method as in claim 3, wherein the act of storing said database includes storing said database on a removable computer readable disk.

13. A method as in claim 1, wherein said act of storing said database 15 includes storing said database on a storage medium accessible to an audiovisual work reproduction unit.

14. A method of creating a playback database for an audiovisual work comprising the acts of:

assigning a respective content ratings level to at least a portion of a scene of said work;

5 creating a database containing information identifying the at least a portion of the scene and the content ratings level; and

uploading said database to an Internet server.

15. A method of controlling reproduction of an audiovisual work comprising the acts of:

10 accessing a stored database containing information identifying at least a portion of a scene of said work having an assigned content ratings level which bears a predetermined relationship to a predetermined content ratings level; and

reproducing scenes of said work in accordance with said at least a portion of a scene which are identified in said database.

15 16. A method as in claim 15, said method further including reading an audiovisual work from a first storage medium.

17. A method as in claim 16, wherein said act of accessing includes reading said database from a second storage medium.

18. A method as in claim 15, wherein said act of accessing comprises establishing a connection to a server containing said database and downloading 5 said database into a controller which controls reproduction of said work, said controller using the information in said database to control reproduction of said work.

19. A method as in claim 18, wherein said act of accessing includes establishing a connection to an Internet server, whereby said connection is an 10 Internet connection.

20. A method as in claim 18, wherein said act of accessing includes establishing a dial-up connection.

21. A method as in claim 15, wherein said act of accessing includes accessing a database containing information identifying those scenes having a 15 content ratings level which is less than or equal to said predetermined content ratings level.

22. A method as in claim 15, wherein said act of accessing includes accessing a database containing information identifying those scenes having a content ratings level which is greater than said predetermined content ratings level.

5 23. A method as in claim 15, wherein said act of accessing includes accessing a database containing data indicating which scenes of said work are to be reproduced.

10 24. A method as in claim 15, wherein said act of accessing includes accessing a database containing data indicating which scenes of said work are not to be reproduced.

25. An apparatus for creating a playback database for an audiovisual work comprising:

a reproduction unit for reproducing scenes of said work;

15 an input device for assigning a ratings level corresponding to a degree of objectionable content to at least a portion of a scene of said work;

a device for creating a database containing an identification of the at least a portion of the scene having an assigned content ratings level; and

a storage medium different from the medium that stores the audiovisual work for storing said database.

26. An apparatus as in claim 25, further comprising a server, said database being stored on a storage medium of said server.

5 27. An apparatus as in claim 25, wherein said storage medium is a portable storage medium.

28. An apparatus as in claim 27, wherein said storage medium is a removable computer readable disk.

10 29. An apparatus as in claim 25, wherein said device assigns an input content ratings level to each scene of said work.

30. An apparatus as in claim 25, wherein said input device receives inputs from a movie reviewer and said database is stored on a storage medium accessible to a work reproduction unit in a household.

15 31. An apparatus as in claim 30, wherein said database contains ratings level information for all scenes of said work.

32. An apparatus as in claim 25, wherein said database contains data indicating which scenes of said work are to be reproduced.

33. An apparatus as in claim 25, wherein said data contains data indicating which scenes of said work are not to be reproduced.

5 34. An apparatus as in claim 25, wherein said identifying information identifies those scenes having a content ratings level which is less than or equal to said predetermined content ratings level.

35. An apparatus as in claim 25, wherein said identifying information identifies those scenes having a content ratings level which is greater than said 10 predetermined content ratings level.

36. An apparatus for controlling playback of an audiovisual work, said apparatus comprising:

a device for accessing a stored database containing an identification of those scenes of said work having a content ratings level which bears a predetermined 15 relationship to a predetermined content ratings level; and

a reproduction unit for reproducing scenes of said work in accordance with scenes which are identified in said database.

37. An apparatus as in claim 36, further comprising a device for accessing said database by way of an Internet connection.

38. An apparatus as in claim 36, further comprising a device for accessing said database by way of a dial-up connection.

5 39. An apparatus as in claim 36, wherein said access device includes a controller for controlling said reproduction unit, said controller using the information contained in said database to control reproduction of said work by said reproduction unit .

40. An apparatus as in claim 39, wherein said controller is a computer.

10 41. An apparatus as in claim 36, wherein said identifying information identifies those scenes having a content ratings level which is less than or equal to said predetermined content ratings level.

15 42. A method as in claim 36, wherein said identifying information identifies those scenes having content ratings level which is greater than said predetermined content ratings level.

43. An apparatus as in claim 36, wherein said database contains data indicating which scenes of said work are to be reproduced.

44. An apparatus as in claim 36, wherein said data contains data indicating which scenes of said work are not to be reproduced.

45. A stored information apparatus comprising:

a recording medium; and

5 a database stored on said recording medium, said database containing information identifying scenes of an audiovisual work which have a content ratings level which bears a predetermined relationship to a predetermined content ratings level, said identifying information being usable to control an audiovisual reproduction unit to reproduce selected scenes of said audiovisual work.

10 46. An apparatus as in claim 45, wherein said identifying information identifies those scenes having a content ratings level which is less than or equal to said predetermined objectionable content ratings level.

15 47. An apparatus as in claim 45, wherein said identifying information identifies those scenes having a content ratings level which is greater than said predetermined content ratings level.

48. An apparatus as in claim 45, wherein said database contains data indicating which scenes of said work are to be reproduced.

49. An apparatus as in claim 45, wherein said database contains data indicating which scenes of said work are not to be reproduced.

50. An apparatus as in claim 45, wherein said stored information apparatus does not include the audiovisual work.

ABSTRACT

Disclosed is a method and apparatus for building a database of content objectionable scenes of an audiovisual work, and a method and apparatus which 5 uses the database to control reproduction of the work. The database may be stored on a server and made available to clients which control an audiovisual reproduction apparatus through a direct dial-up or Internet connection.

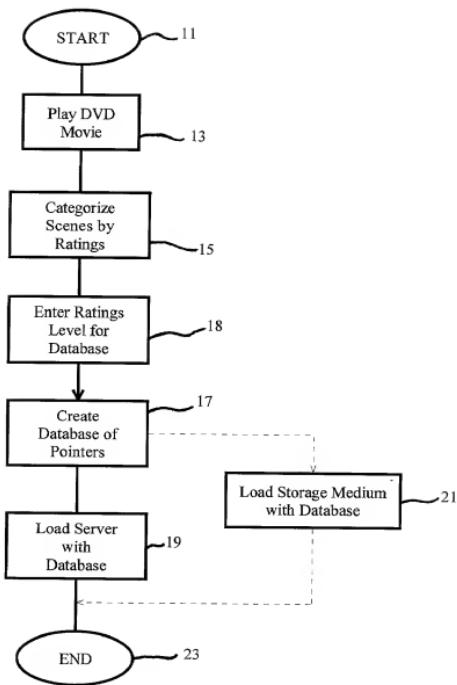


FIG. 1

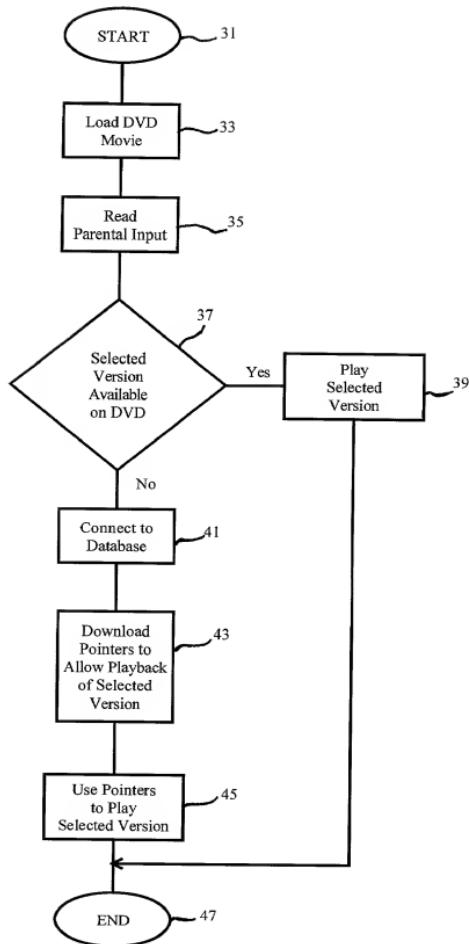


FIG. 2

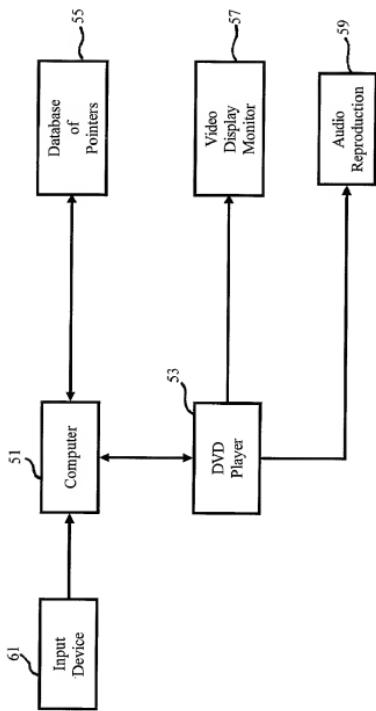


FIG. 3

Docket No.

M3850.0042/P042

Declaration and Power of Attorney for Patent Application
English Language Declaration

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR CONTROLLING REPRODUCTION OF AN AUDIOVISUAL WORK

the specification of which (check one)

is attached hereto.

was filed on _____
as United States Application No. or PCT International Application No. _____
and was amended on _____ (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose to the United States Patent and Trademark Office all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(a)-(d) or Section 365(b) of any foreign applications(s) for patent or inventor's certificate, or Section 365(a) of any PCT international application which designated at least one country other than the United States, listed below and have also identified below, by checking the box, any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate or PCT international application having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

Prior Foreign Application(s)

Priority Not
Claimed

_____ (Number) _____ (Country) _____ (Filing Date)

_____ (Number) _____ (Country) _____ (Filing Date)

_____ (Number) _____ (Country) _____ (Filing Date)

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. Section 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below:

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| (Application Serial No.) | (Filing Date) |
| (Application Serial No.) | (Filing Date) |
| (Application Serial No.) | (Filing Date) |

I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. Section 120 of any United States application(s), or Section 365(c) of any PCT international application designating the United States, listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States or PCT international application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. Section 112. I acknowledge the duty to disclose to the United States Patent and Trademark Office all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, C.F.R., Section 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

| | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|--|
| (Application Serial No.) | (Filing Date) | (Status) (patented, pending, abandoned) |
| (Application Serial No.) | (Filing Date) | (Status) (patented, pending, abandoned) |
| (Application Serial No.) | (Filing Date) | (Status) (patented, pending, abandoned) |

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that wilful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such wilful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

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